

## TALKING TO FARMERS.

Another Great Speech by Hon. L. D. Whiting, of Bureau County, Illinois.

Tracing Clearly the Depression in the Agricultural Interests to Trusts, Pools,

And Other Monopolies Fostered by Extravagant Custom-House Taxation.

(Dixon (Ill.) cor. Chicago Herald.)

The second day's session of the Farmers' Institute attracted a large number of people to this city. The Opera House was crowded both at the morning and evening sessions. The programme was strictly followed. The sensation of the day was the address of Senator L. D. Whiting on "The Decline of Agricultural Prosperity—Its Cause and Cure." Mr. Whiting traced clearly the depression in the agricultural interest to trusts, pools and other monopolies fostered by exorbitant custom-house taxation. He spoke as follows:

As farmers perform their share of hard work and practice their portion of economy, it will be conceded that they ought to enjoy their proportion of prosperity. Add to this the fact that for the last twenty years agricultural products turned the balance of trade to our country and poured over the land golden showers, enriching all interests except the one which produced it, the prosperity of the farmer may well be an object of national concern. Great cities have arisen like magic; great corporations have sprung into existence with imperial wealth and power; great manufacturing enterprises capable of supplying a continent if run on full time; great individual fortunes giving as a class of American lords—except alone the tide.

Amid all this, our class, which mainly produced it, enjoys but a scanty share. Agriculture is suffering a blight. The lands of Bureau County have declined in price more than \$10 an acre, aggregating a loss to land owners in that county of over \$5,000,000. It is within bounds to say that in the State at large the loss has been over \$200,000,000. New England agriculture, except in special lines, is in ruin. The fine farming regions of Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio are marked by dilapidation. In that vast sweep from Kansas to Minnesota half the farms are under mortgage, drawing high rates of interest; and the time is near when these families struggling to save their homes will be outcasts, driven to despair. This picture is corroborated by the census. During the last two census decades the wealth of the nation increased from \$16,000,000,000 to \$44,000,000,000, being a net gain of \$28,000,000,000. Of this great gain half of the people who live on the farms received a little less than \$5,000,000,000, while the other half secured \$23,000,000,000. The \$5,000,000,000 gained by the farmers was in the new farms on the public domain. The established farms declined in average value from \$3,200 to \$2,400.

Governor Oglesby noticed this tendency in his inaugural address in 1873, as follows: "It is a pleasure to congratulate you that in that general sense in which all the interests of the people are considered it may be correctly said our affairs are in a satisfactory condition. In a more limited, and yet largely in a general sense, it is hardly so. All the products of the farm are ranging at prices scarcely remunerative; the productions of other branches of industry are nearer the prices of more recent years. Corresponding changes have not, for some cause, affected other industries." The Governor saw that agriculture was suffering a blight while other pursuits were prosperous. The causes of the decline, which he did not discuss, I propose here to consider to some extent.

1. A world-wide competition with the cheapest of all cheap labor in Europe and Asia depresses prices. I know of no remedy for this, except as we are compelled to sell cheap, we must buy cheap.

2. The combinations known as pools and trusts are extending to all pursuits to subvert the laws of trade. "Competition" and "supply and demand" are now nearly obsolete. Lumber, sugar, coal, barbed wire, iron and steel, plows, and oil may be mentioned as a few of a multitude.

3. The extortion in charges of transportation companies, to pay large dividends on watered stock, and certain practices of stock yards and grain elevators, to unduly increase their enormous profits.

4. The adulterations, false weights, shams, and shoddies in things we buy, at rates which should procure the genuine and full weights and measures.

5. The high and exceptional rates of interest which farmers pay on their loans.

6. The unjust provisions and workings of the State revenue laws, permitting large evasions, to be made good by doubly loading the land.

7. The protective tariff system, which gives bounties to certain classes at the expense of others—the burden resting finally mostly on producers.

These are some of the suction-pumps, but probably not all. The operators of these suction-pumps comfort us by stating that goods are now cheaper than formerly. No doubt this is true. There are now steam engines enough to more than double the power of every human being, and four-fifths of these have come into use during the past twenty-five years. During this period there have been such marvelous discoveries in iron and steel as to make them substitutes for wood. Gas, coal, and inventions innumerable have ushered in a new era of manufacturing. These powers and processes of nature are not to be monopolized by one class of men. Like the air and the sunlight, they are for all mankind. The suction-pump operators further tell us that farmers are better off than formerly—that we have painted houses in place of log cabins; that we wear overcoats, ride in carriages, and on gala days can scarcely be distinguished from villagers! It may be well to give notice that farmers intend to duly share in the blessings and duties of civilization.

One-half the value of Illinois is in land, the other half in railroads and other corporations, moneys and credits, and other personals. But land pays 79 per cent of the taxes, and the other half 21 per cent. Incumbered real estate pays double. The debtor pays high interest on his mortgage, and then pays taxes on all, as though no mortgage existed. If the holder of the mortgage does not forget, he also pays taxes on his mortgage. Massachusetts has done away with this robbery by dividing this tax ratably between debtor and creditor. Tax evaders will not permit this just law to be enacted in Illinois. The overburdened debtor must continue to pay double, that they may wholly escape. So crushing burdens are borne till strength fails and the home is lost.

The aggregate of valuation in Illinois has declined since 1873 about \$500,000,000. The strange part is, that the chief decline was where property had most advanced. Railroads were assessed in 1873.....\$123,928,470. Railroads were assessed in 1886.....\$62,972,101. Corporations other than railroads were assessed in 1873.....\$21,898,451.

Since then our Secretary of State has ground out about three corporations a day, and these claimed a capital of more than \$2,000,000,000; yet new and old were assessed in 1886 \$3,756,577, a decline of five-sixths. Cook County was assessed, just after Chicago emerged from the fire with 300,000 inhabitants, \$500,208,660. Much of the time since has got

off half this amount; but now, with her great city doubled in wealth and population, and with many suburban towns, her assessment is \$203,625,883, or two-thirds as much as it was assessed fifteen years ago. It is believed that \$400,000,000 of money and credit and other values evade all taxes.

The raise of the rate of State taxation from 27 cents on the \$100 to 33 $\frac{1}{2}$  comes in part from this decline in valuation, and part from large appropriations to new subjects. Lands must bear the chief brunt.

National taxes have grown since 1863 more than nine-fold. Now, \$100,000,000 more and more can be dropped from this vast sum. This should be a boon to a tax-ridden people; but strange doctrines are preached from high sources. Instead of cheaper sugar, lumber, clothing and other necessities of life, relief is to be offered in cheap whisky and tobacco!

This ludicrous proposition proves to be made in earnest, and unless vigorously opposed it may succeed. Manufacturers do not wish to pander to evil, but they seek to find some excuse and necessity to keep the high tariff intact throughout. The breaking of one link in the grand tariff chain is feared, lest it may dissolve the tariff confederacy. The new pretensions set up may best be seen by a brief historical review.

The first notable move for a protective tariff was after the war of 1812. That war had forced into existence manufacturing enterprises with small capital and less skill. Henry Clay led the move to give them temporary protection. His own words are given in his biography written by Carl Schurz. Mr. Clay made a series of speeches throughout the country just previous to his nomination for the Presidency in 1844. Of these utterances Mr. Schurz writes: "He expressed himself sonorously upon all the old Whig principles and measures, repeating his views of the protective tariff as a temporary arrangement which the infant industries, rapidly growing up to manhood, would not much longer require."

The present high protective tariff had a patriotic beginning. The great demands of the Treasury in the late war led to imposing direct taxes on the goods of our own manufacturers. Simultaneously the present high tariff was imposed as a compensation. After the close of the war the direct taxes on manufacturers were repealed, but the manufacturers were fortunate enough to retain the war tariff. This gives the Treasury more money than is needed. The lowering of national taxes should be a blessing. The removal of the extra war tariff is a natural sequence, and would greatly relieve consumers. But the original doctrine of protection to infant industries is now to be superseded. Perpetual protection, and the higher the better, is the new dogma. The iron and steel interests are the center of a vast tariff confederacy seeking the endorsement of the country to this doctrine. Its effect upon agriculture is already seen in the census statistics now given. I will here give one more, bringing the facts nearer home. Before the enactment of the present high tariff the State of Illinois was fast gaining upon Massachusetts in wealth, as may well be supposed, from natural causes. Since the war tariff enactment the case is reversed.

In 1860 the per capita wealth of Massachusetts was \$602. That of Illinois was \$509. In 1880 Massachusetts had increased her per capita to \$1,568, while Illinois had reached but \$1,005. While Illinois, with her great natural advantages, had doubled Massachusetts, with her sterile soil and rocks, advanced 150 per cent. Massachusetts claims that Illinois shall pay for her goods sufficiently high to make up the difference of wages between this country and Europe. Let me inquire who is to pay to Illinois farmers the difference between farm wages here and farm wages in the old world? If we should grant the claim of Massachusetts to help her pay her laborers, 20 per cent tariff will amply cover the case, as that is about the amount that the cost of labor bears to the price of the manufactured goods. The other 20 and more per cent exacted by the present tariff is, perhaps, as a remedy suggest an import duty of 20 cents on barley, 25 cents on potatoes, and \$2 per 100 on cabbages.

This is statesmanship of the modern American school. Our agriculturists have paid half of the war debt; they have in exchange for their products in competitive markets brought to this country hundreds of millions of dollars in gold, and thus restored our currency to a specie basis; they send out of the country hundreds of millions of farm products; sell unprotected in foreign markets; and when they seek to bring home in exchange for wheat, cotton, etc., such goods as they are given, the custom-house officer—who is the representative of such freebooters as Warner Miller and Andrew Carnegie—confiscates one-third of all their foreign customers were willing to give in exchange.

This is the situation, and these quack doctors, these sham statesmen, these political voodoos, suggest "more protection" to the pockets of the lumber lords by being protected from Canadian competition. The power of the lumber lords was seen in the rebuilding of Chicago after the fire. Though Chicago politics was "protection," in practice she became a "free trader" for a year. Congress granted their request on all things, except lumber—the thing of all others, most needed and most just to be placed on the free list. The lumber kings were too much for Chicago, and so their tariff exacts with their trust combinations remain to tax the West millions and hurry the destruction of our forests. The shivering pioneers of Dakota and Minnesota, struggling with small means to shelter their wives and children from the fierce storms, must continue to pay the bounty. Who knows how many of that thousand or more who sank in the snow for a winding-sheet were lost for want of supply of lumber, coal, blankets and clothing?

Farmers must study public matters from their own standpoint. They must make them paramount to all other questions, long enough at least to arrest the downward slide. Duty, public interest, patriotism and Christianity demand it. Let agitation, education and organization proceed.

### RAIDING THE FARMERS.

A High Tariff Organ's Barren Attempt to Organize Another Scheme to Plunder.

The New York Tribune's Gauzy Scheme to Delude and Hoodwink the Farmers.

[From the Louisville Courier-Journal.] The New York Tribune, recognizing the waning power of protection even in New York and in New England, turns with desperation to the farmers of the West and South, crying, "Help us, Cassius, or we sink."

The attempt to delude the farmers with the idea that they can be helped by protection is as hopeless an undertaking as any newspaper ever entered on. As a political movement it is doomed to failure, and its only justification from a newspaper standpoint is that, like sending explorers in search of the North Pole, or inventors up in a balloon, it advertises the resources and the enterprise of the newspaper connected with it. Indeed, as a reckless and open scheme, it surpasses the *Herald's* plan to find the North Pole and bring it into New York harbor, and the *World's* arrangement for solving the problem of Arctic navigation.

At the beginning of its plan the *Tribune* addressed a number of letters to farmers everywhere, calling attention to the depressed prices of farm products, hinting

that it was due to the large importation of wool, eggs, potatoes, etc., and suggesting that the real remedy was an extension of protection to the farmer.

The farmers were asked to submit their views to the *Tribune*, and these letters were to be put before a committee, mostly of protected manufacturers, to examine and pray over, and then they were to be made public, as an expression of the farmers on the tariff, with the expectation that it would have the effect to stiffen the backbone of the Republicans in Congress from the West, and make them "stand firm" against any reduction whatever in the tariff.

The committee of eminent "agriculturists" selected to revise and edit this correspondence was composed of Warner Miller, a noted manufacturer of paper, who had a fortune transferred from newspaper publishers to himself by the tariff; William M. Grosvenor, who once wrote a free-trade book, "Does Protection Protect?" but who surrendered his views in order to obtain a position on the staff of the New York *Tribune*; John T. Reid, Edward Burroughs, J. D. Lyman, and J. Hall. The Hon. James Wilson, of Iowa, was asked to co-operate with these gentlemen in manufacturing this campaign thunder, but rather than be caught in such company, he fled to Texas or Mexico, beyond the reach of the wires of the New York *Tribune*. It is thought he will not return till the storm blows over.

These gentlemen, after pondering over and inwardly digesting the facts submitted to them, felt that the only remedy for the deplorable state of affairs was to circulate the following petition:

To the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

The undersigned respectfully pray that agriculture may be more effectually protected by preventing fraudulent importations of cattle on pretense that they are for breeding only; by a duty of 20 cents per bushel on barley, with proportionate increase of duty on malt; by duties of 25 cents per bushel on potatoes and onions, \$2 per 100 on cabbages, 10 cents per pound on hops, 20 cents on beans and peas, 5 cents per dozen on eggs, 30 per cent on fowls and poultry, and on vegetables in their natural state or in salt or brine, not otherwise provided for, with no removal or reduction of duties on market garden products now dutiable; by such increased duties on flax and linen goods as will effectually encourage the preparation of fiber and manufacture of goods; by abolishing all duties on sugar, with a bounty to home producers; by preventing imports of leaf tobacco suitable for wrappers at the duty imposed on other leaf tobacco, and repealing all internal taxes on tobacco; by restoring to wool growing the substantial protection enjoyed under the tariff of 1867, so modified as to meet the latter forms of foreign competition and of evasion.

It seems, therefore, that after twenty-eight years of protective tariff, under which the farmers have been robbed to enrich the manufacturer; after the experience of a generation in which the wealth of the farmers, one-half of the population, has increased four thousand millions, and the wealth of the other half of the population has increased twenty-four thousand millions, Mr. Warner Miller and Mr. Grosvenor discover the tariff is defective, and as a remedy suggest an import duty of 20 cents on barley, 25 cents on potatoes, and \$2 per 100 on cabbages.

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"Protection is for our good," they tell us. "We want it also for the good of our workers. It makes goods higher, but then we pay it in better wages." "It makes goods lower, so the farmer gets a benefit." "The foreigner pays the duty." "If you do not wish to pay the duty, buy goods made at home." This jumble, when seen together, needs no reply. One matter may be ventilated. Let it be illustrated on lumber. But a few tens of thousands go into the National Treasury on imported lumber, but millions go into the pockets of the lumber lords by being protected from Canadian competition.

The power of the lumber lords was seen in the rebuilding of Chicago after the fire. Though Chicago politics was "protection," in practice she became a "free trader" for a year. Congress granted their request on all things, except lumber—the thing of all others, most needed and most just to be placed on the free list. The lumber kings were too much for Chicago, and so their tariff exacts with their trust combinations remain to tax the West millions and hurry the destruction of our forests. The shivering pioneers of Dakota and Minnesota, struggling with small means to shelter their wives and children from the fierce storms, must continue to pay the bounty. Who knows how many of that thousand or more who sank in the snow for a winding-sheet were lost for want of supply of lumber, coal, blankets and clothing?

Farmers must study public matters from their own standpoint. They must make them paramount to all other questions, long enough at least to arrest the downward slide. Duty, public interest, patriotism and Christianity demand it. Let agitation, education and organization proceed.

The American farmer understands that the tariff is a gigantic scheme of highway robbery. He knows that Miller, Carnegie & Co. are plundering him daily. He knows that when they propose to divide the spoils of their raids they are dishonest. He knows that if these men stop robbing the farmer, and take him into partnership, there is no other class to be robbed with any surety of safety and profit.

The tariff is beneficial to one class only as it is hurtful to another. It builds up A by breaking down B. For A to say to B let us join forces and plunder each other is absurd. Or, if you please, divide the community in three classes—A the manufacturer, B the farmer, and C the mercantile, transportation and professional men. A has been robbing B and C; now he says to B let us plunder C, and you have one-tenth of the spoils. B is not to be deceived or tempted by any such scheme. All he asks is to be allowed to sell in the highest market and buy in the lowest, leaving at the custom house on his return only enough to meet the necessary expenses of an economical government.

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"Above all, I think the taxes on the necessities of life, such as clothing, coal, lumber, salt, etc., etc., ought to be reduced or abolished. The internal revenue on liquors and tobacco, on the other hand, ought to be retained, these two things being in the nature of luxuries, although I myself use both of these things on occasion" (and indeed, that very minute the Senator blew the smoke from a pretty good sort of weed at his interviewer), and I am not ashamed to own it, even in this State. I am willing, as everybody is, to pay the tax on liquor and tobacco. When I am too poor to do so any longer I'll quit using them."

But It Must Go to Save the Blessed War Tariff.

The total tax derived from beer and whisky since the internal-revenue system was established in September, 1862, to January 1, 1883, foots up \$1,400,000,000. On what subjects of taxation could so much money have been collected with as little burden to tax-payers? The man who did not use either article did not pay a cent of this tax.—*Montgomery Advertiser*.

Mr. Sutton said that he was heartily in favor of tariff reform, and in reply to the question as to what his own ideas on the subject were, he replied literally as follows:

"I am in favor of a protective system of taxation, both in tariff and internal taxes and in direct taxes."

"I am in favor of so reforming taxation as to make it conform to the ideas which

we carry out in the transactions of ordinary every day business.

"I am in favor of paying the expenses of government in the same manner in which a business man pays his own expenses, out of these things which can be most easily spared.

"There never was a worse fraud practiced upon a credulous people than is practiced by Eastern monopolists in pretending that they need the benefits of a protective tariff in order to enable them to increase the wages of their employees. The iron industry of this country in 1870 paid their employees an annual wage of over \$500. In 1880, after having had the benefit of ten most prosperous years and a high protective tariff, they paid their employees an average yearly wage of less than \$400, and this, too, when there was an increase of the net profits in the iron industry of over 25 per cent. That is to say, each employee in 1870 earned for his employer a net profit of about \$800 a year and was paid out of that an average of \$526. In 1880 each earned for his employer a net profit of about \$1,000, and yet got out of that \$1,000 for his wages less than \$400.

"Now, the facts are, as stated by Smith and Ricardo, and all the other authorities on political economy, that profits have nothing whatever to do in any country in fixing the rate of wages paid the employees.

Adam Smith, who wrote over 100 years ago, made this remarkable statement on the subject. He said:

"Employers are everywhere and always combined by a tacit understanding not to raise wages above a certain rate, and he who doesn't know this is ignorant both of the people and of the subject."

"It is in favor of paying the expenses of

government in the same manner in which a business man pays his own expenses, out of these things which can be most easily spared.

"It is further true that every means is

resorted to that skill and science can suggest to secure cheap labor. Every manufacturer, while not free to raise wages, is